

FY 2005 Final Phase

Input Opportunity Report



July 2005



Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG)

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Cover Page Photo:

Chandler Mayor Boyd Dunn (blue jeans and blue shirt) joins Arizona Governor Janet Napolitano for a ribbon cutting to celebrate the opening of the Santan freeway from Arizona Avenue to the Loop 101 Price Freeway on Saturday, June 11, 2005. The freeway opening was the largest yet, with nearly 15,000 people attending. MAG staff was on hand to receive public comment on Valley transportation plans and programs.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

The Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) continues to emphasize public involvement in the metropolitan transportation planning process. The intent of the public involvement provisions in TEA-21 is to increase public awareness and involvement in transportation planning and programming. TEA-21 requires that the metropolitan planning organization work cooperatively with the state department of transportation and the regional transit operator to provide citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of transportation agency employees, freight shippers, private providers of transportation, representatives of users of public transit, and other interested parties a reasonable opportunity to comment on proposed transportation plans and programs.

The Final Phase Input Opportunity for the FY 2006-2010 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and Regional Transportation Plan (Plan) Update was conducted from mid May through June 16, 2005. The Final Phase generally provides opportunity for final input on the Draft TIP and any updates to the Plan. Citizens are invited to provide comments and suggestions for the Valley's transportation system. The input is then collected and entered into the Final Phase Input Opportunity Report, which is presented to the Transportation Policy Committee, MAG Management Committee and MAG Regional Council for review and consideration.

INPUT OPPORTUNITIES

More traditional forums for input were used during the FY 2005 Final Phase Input Opportunity. MAG received public comment at all committee meetings during the phase, and during the policy committee meetings of Management Committee, Transportation Policy Committee and Regional Council. On Saturday, June 11, 2005, MAG participated with the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) in freeway opening for the Santan Freeway in the Southeast Valley. Staff from ADOT and MAG were available to answer questions and respond to citizen comments. On Thursday, June 16, 2005 MAG held its Final Phase Open House and Public Hearing at the MAG offices. Staff from MAG, ADOT, Valley Metro and Valley Metro Rail were available during the open house to answer questions and respond to citizen comments. A court reporter was in attendance during the public hearing to record citizen comments verbatim. All comments received during the final phase are provided a formal response within this document.

LOCATIONS

The Final Phase public meetings and events were held to provide input opportunities for residents in the MAG region. The specific locations, dates and times are shown below. Meeting and event times were varied in an attempt to accommodate as many citizens as possible. The Final Phase committee meetings were held during the week, in the afternoon and evening. The Santan Freeway Opening was held on a weekend, while the Final Phase Transportation Open House and Public Hearing was held during the week after work hours.

Transportation Policy Committee

Phoenix
Wednesday, May 18, 2005
4:00 p.m.

Management Committee

Phoenix
Wednesday, June 15, 2005
12:00 p.m.

Regional Council

Phoenix
Wednesday, May 25, 2005
5:00 p.m.

Final Phase Transportation Open House and Public Hearing

Phoenix
Thursday, June 16, 2005
Open House – 4:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Public Hearing – 5:00 p.m.

Santan Freeway Opening

Chandler
Saturday, June 11, 2005
8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

All of these public events were scheduled in venues that are transit accessible and comply with the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act. In addition, Spanish language materials, sign language interpretation, alternative materials such as large print and Braille, and FM/Infrared Listening Devices were available upon request.

SUMMARY OF INPUT

Input gathered during the Final Phase Input Opportunity is included in the Final Phase Input Opportunity Report. A summary of the input received is listed below.

- All projects should be considered for conformity, including transit projects.
- When constructing the arterial system, pedestrian and bike facilities should be built at the same time.
- All of the projects proposed in the Plan should be built before adding any new projects to the program.
- More and better bus service in the West Valley.
- We need better Dial-A-Ride service.

- Light Rail needs to go all the way to East Mesa.
- Retirement age people in East Mesa need better transit – especially buses.
- We need better roads overall in the Southeast Valley, including in Pinal County.
- The street maintenance in Mesa needs to be better.
- Due to high gas prices, we need more and better public transportation.
- What is the City of Phoenix doing with the I-10 bus terminal?
- Light rail needs to be extended faster than in the next 20 years.
- When is the new bus service from Proposition 400 going to be implemented?
- We need the rubberizing of the freeways to be completed sooner.
- There need to be more bus shelters all over the Valley.
- We need to decrease the number of high pollution days in the Valley.
- Valley Metro's customer service needs to be more responsive to citizen inquiries.
- When will the bus system be integrated into a regional system?
- There needs to be bus service along Bell and Grand Avenue as soon as possible.

I. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROCESS

INTRODUCTION

The Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) continues to emphasize public involvement in the metropolitan transportation planning process. The intent of the public involvement provisions in TEA-21 is to increase public awareness and involvement in transportation planning and programming. TEA-21 requires that the metropolitan planning organization work cooperatively with the state department of transportation and the regional transit operator to provide citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of transportation agency employees, freight shippers, private providers of transportation, representatives of users of public transit, and other interested parties a reasonable opportunity to comment on proposed transportation plans and programs.

In September 1994, the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) Regional Council adopted a public involvement process for receiving public opinion, comment and suggestions on

The MAG Process for Public Involvement receives public opinion in accord with federal requirements, and provides opportunities for early and continuing involvement in the transportation planning and programming process.

transportation planning and programming in the MAG region, which is in accord with federal requirements. This process provides complete information on transportation plans, timely public notice, full public access to key decisions, and opportunities for early and continuing involvement in the planning process.

The public involvement process is divided into four phases: Early Phase, Mid-Phase, Final Phase and continuous involvement. The Early Phase meetings ensure early involvement of the public in the development of these plans and programs. This year, the Early Phase input opportunity was conducted from August through October, 2004. The results of these meetings are included in the *FY 2005 Early Phase Input Opportunity Report* (October 2004).

The Mid-Phase process provides for input on initial plan analysis for the TIP and Plan, and includes a public hearing on regional transportation issues. The Mid-Phase is usually conducted from February through April, 2005. The results of the Mid-Phase Input Opportunity are included in the *FY 2005 Mid-Phase Input Opportunity Report* (April 2005). The Final Phase provides an opportunity for final comment on the TIP, Plan and Air Quality Conformity Analysis, and generally occurs upon the completion of the air quality conformity analysis in the summer. The results of the Final Phase Input Opportunity are included in this report. In addition, continuous outreach is conducted throughout the annual update process and includes activities such as presentations to community and civic groups, distributing press releases and newsletters, and coordinating with the Citizens Transportation Oversight Committee (CTOC).

ENHANCED PUBLIC OUTREACH PROCESS

In July 1998, the Regional Council recommended that the process for programming federal transportation funds be enhanced. These enhancements include a more proactive community outreach process and the development of early guidelines to help select transportation projects within resource limits. The proactive community outreach process led to an enhanced public involvement process beginning with the FY 1999 Public Involvement Program. The enhanced public involvement process involves transportation stakeholders as outlined in TEA-21 and includes input from Title VI stakeholders (minority and low income populations). The input received during the enhanced input opportunity has been incorporated in the development of early guidelines to guide project selection for the TIP and Plan.

Additional changes in planning and programming responsibilities were prompted by the passage of TEA-21. As a result, ADOT hosted a meeting of regional planning organizations to suggest changes that would benefit the planning and programming process throughout Arizona. The meeting was held in Casa Grande in April 1999 and was attended by representatives of Metropolitan Planning Organizations, Councils of Governments, ADOT and Valley Metro. All participants agreed to several guiding principles to help develop and integrate state and regional transportation plans and programs. In the past, development of the MAG TIP, MAG Long Range Plan, Surface Transportation Program (STP) and State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) were on different schedules – which was confusing to members of the public. With changes included in the guiding principles adopted at the April meeting, the two planning and programming processes have been combined. (See Page 7).

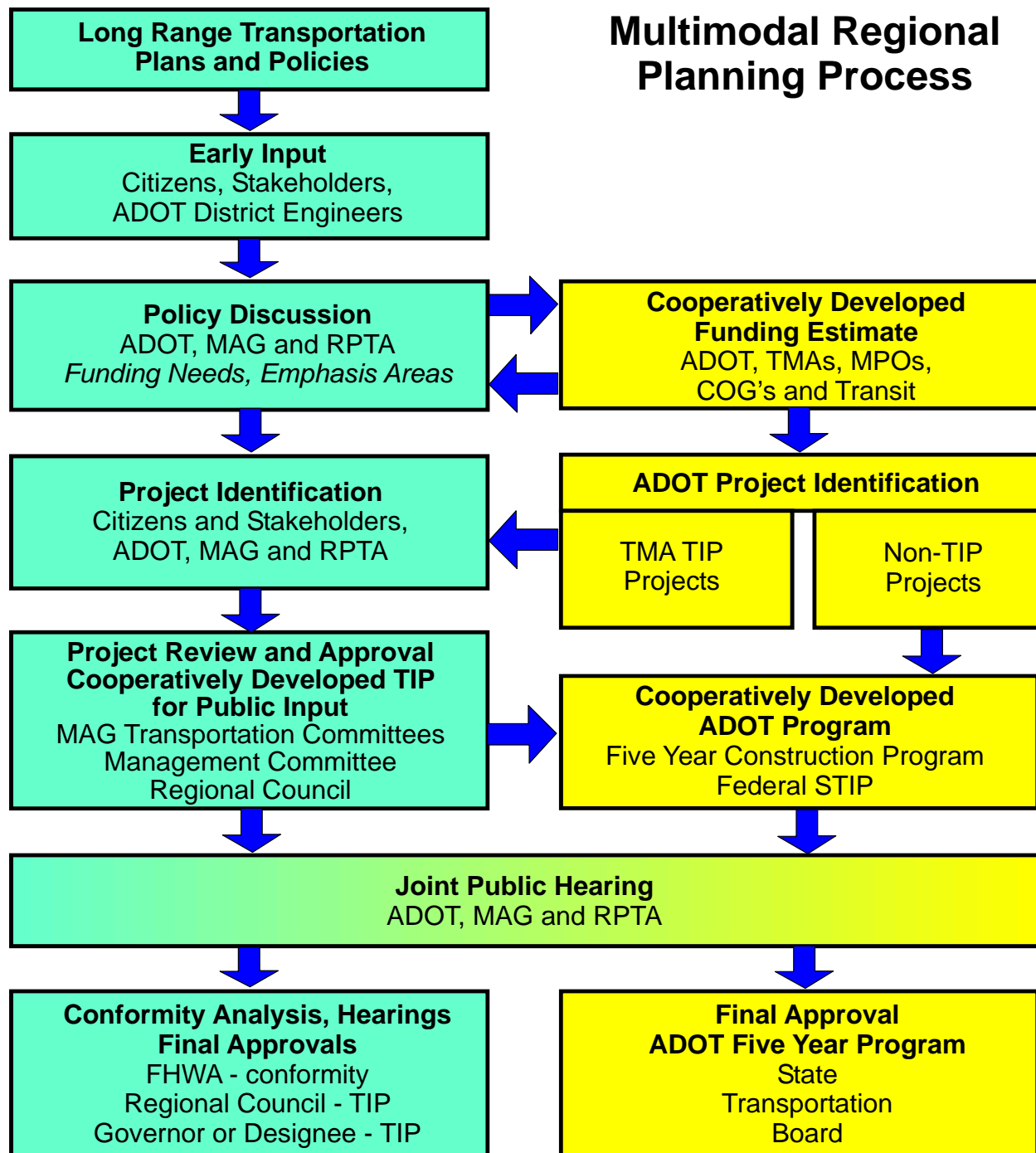


Table 1: Development Process for ADOT Five-Year Program, MAG TIP, MAG LRTP, and ADOT Life Cycle Program (Joint Planning Process)

- * **TMA:** Transportation Management Area
- * **FHWA:** Federal Highway Administration
- * **RPTA:** Regional Public Transportation Authority
- * **COG:** Council of Governments
- * **MPO:** Metropolitan Planning Organization

**Guiding Principles
New Arizona Transportation Planning and Programming Process
Casa Grande Resolves**

- , One multimodal transportation planning process for each region that is seamless to the public; includes early and regular dialogue and interaction at the state and regional level; and recognizes the needs of state, local and tribal governments, and regional organizations.
- , Process that encourages early and frequent public participation and stakeholder involvement and that meets the requirements of TEA-21 and other state and federal planning requirements.
- , The policy and transportation objectives of the state, regional and local plans will form the foundation of the Statewide Long Range Transportation Plan.
- , The Statewide Transportation Plan and Programs will be based on clearly defined and agreed to information and assumptions including the resources available, performance measures, and other technical information.
- , Each project programmed shall be linked to the Statewide Long Range Transportation Plan with each project selected to achieve one or more of the Plan objectives, and the program represents an equitable allocation of resources.
- , Implementation of the Plan and Program shall be monitored using a common database of regularly updated program information and allocations.
- , There is a shared responsibility by state, local and tribal governments, and regional organizations to ensure that Plan and Program implementation meet the transportation needs of the people of Arizona.

Table 2: Casa Grande Resolves

PUBLICITY

The public was informed of Final Phase public involvement events through a variety of methods. The Final Phase Transportation Open House and Public Hearing were announced with a targeted mailing to the MAG public involvement mail list of more than 3,000 individuals, as well as noticed with a public hearing notice in *The Arizona Republic*. A postcard notice of the Final Phase Transportation Open House and Public Hearing was also sent to approximately 25 regional libraries throughout the Valley. Each library was sent approximately 20 postcards. MAG was also part of other events that were advertised in newspapers across the Valley.

CONTINUOUS INVOLVEMENT

As part of the continuous outreach process, MAG staff has participated in a number of events since the completion of the Mid-Phase Input Opportunity. Activities included:

- , Small group presentations, participation in special events and providing information to residents via e-mail, telephone and one-on-one consultations.
- , MAG membership and involvement with several civic organizations in the region including the Phoenix Chamber of Commerce, Valley Forward, Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, Hispanic Community Forum, Latino Institute and The League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC).
- , Continued consideration of input received by the MAG Human Services Planning Program in its public outreach process.
- , Continued community outreach to Title VI/Environmental Justice populations, utilizing the MAG Community Outreach Specialist and MAG Disability Outreach Associate.
- , Continued involvement with the Citizens Transportation Oversight Committee (CTOC).
- , Partnership in numerous special events in which MAG, ADOT, Valley Metro, and Valley Metro Rail jointly participated.
- , Monthly e-mail updates from the Transportation Policy Committee.

Additional outreach activities included updating the MAG Web site at www.mag.maricopa.gov. The site provides information on MAG committees and issues of regional importance, as well as access to electronic documents and links to member agencies. The site also provides a Spanish language link. Visitors to the site may provide feedback through various project pages. Staff contact information is provided for specific projects. Users may also send comments or questions via e-mail to mag@mag.maricopa.gov. In addition, each quarter MAG distributes a newsletter, *MAGAZine*, which includes information about MAG activities and the issues and concerns of the cities, towns and tribal communities of Maricopa County. Ongoing coordination with ADOT, Valley Metro, Valley Metro Rail and CTOC have also led to enhancements to the public involvement process.

II. PUBLIC HEARING/MEETING COMMENTS AND RESPONSES

INTRODUCTION

This section is organized by meeting/event location and includes written/oral comments received during the Final Phase public input opportunities. Comments received at the open house/public hearing are included in transcript form under Section III of this report, while other comments taken by staff representatives are listed below. In some cases, comments listed below are summarized and not taken verbatim.

COMMENTS RECEIVED DURING FINAL PHASE TRANSPORTATION POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING ON MAY 18, 2005

Comments from William “Blue” Crowley, Valley Resident

Comment: Is the Truck Travel Survey in the MAG Work Program doing a baseline for pollutants in the CANAMEX corridor?

Response: The Truck Travel Survey will not specifically inventory emissions from trucks. However, data will be collected on truck travel characteristics, including number of trips by land use type, which will improve MAG’s ability to simulate and forecast truck travel in the region. This will result in an increased capability to estimate truck travel emissions throughout the MAG area and along specific corridors.

Comment: ADOT and CTOC had a quorum at the April public hearing, but not MAG. If Regional Council members do not attend the hearing, it is disrespectful to the citizens who do come.

Response: Members of the Regional Council Executive Committee are invited to participate and attend if their schedules permit. It is important to note that all Regional Council members receive a copy of the Input Opportunity Report, which includes verbatim transcripts of the hearing. A staff presentation summarizing the input received at the hearing is also given prior to any action taken. A quorum of Regional Council members at MAG public hearings is not required by federal law, nor necessary to facilitate the public hearing process.

Comment: Bus, bike and transit need to be addressed when roadways are updated, constructed, or maintained.

Response: As part of the process of developing a roadway project, cities and towns, as well as Maricopa County, consider a range of pedestrian, bicycle and transit features that may be a part of the project. The type of features included in the final project depend on the transportation needs in the area of the project, the status of existing and planned pedestrian, bicycle and transit services in the surrounding community, and the amount and types of funding resources available for the project. Depending on the mix of these circumstances, in certain cases it may be most advantageous to take a staged approach to the particular features included in a specific roadway improvement.

Comment: Grand Avenue from 43rd Avenue to 67th Avenue is bicycle, pedestrian, and transit unfriendly.

Response: Since Grand Avenue is dominated by industrial and commercial land uses, the bike path networks maintained by the jurisdictions in the area of the Grand Avenue corridor are generally oriented to the collector and arterial grid system. However, the ongoing MAG Grand Avenue Major Investment Study (Phase II), which covers Grand Avenue between Loop 101 and McDowell Road, is reviewing opportunities for bicycle and pedestrian improvements along the facility.

Comment: Phoenix has not addressed the I-10 Deck Park terminal and there is no timeline for completion.

Response: Valley Metro/RPTA recently completed a feasibility study of the Papago Intermodal Transfer Station located in the Deck Park Tunnel. That study concluded that there were no fatal flaws to completing and operating the express bus station. The study provided order of magnitude costs for the freeway access improvements that would be required at the east and west end of the station in order for buses to be able to safely enter and exit the facility. A decision to complete and operate the facility would need to be reached by ADOT, the City of Phoenix, and Valley Metro/RPTA and would require the identification and acquisition of funding to complete the required access improvements and fitting out of the station. At the present time, no funding has been identified for the completion and operation of this facility.

Comment: Proposition 200 passed and it was not completed, and now you want Proposition 400 funds to pay for it.

Response: Proposition 300 was passed in 1985 by the voters of Maricopa County to fund the construction of new freeways in the region. As a result of this tax, along with some federal and state funding, the freeway network in the region has been expanded from basically a single freeway (Black Canyon/Papago-south), along with some minimal mileage on the Superstition Freeway, to a major freeway system. This freeway system includes the addition of Loop 101 (Agua Fria Freeway, Pima Freeway, Price Freeway), Loop 202 (Red Mountain Freeway, Santan Freeway), State Route (SR) 51 (Piestewa Freeway), SR 143 (Hohokam Expressway), major extensions of I-10 (west) and the

Superstition Freeway, and construction of an interim facility in the Loop 303 corridor. In addition, a series of grade separations were constructed along Grand Avenue to smooth traffic flow at the six-point intersections that occur nearly every mile on this facility. The Paradise Freeway and Loop 303 were dropped from the regional transportation plan and were not constructed. The South Mountain Freeway component of Loop 202 will not be completed under Proposition 300, due to a funding shortfall. Proposition 400 revenues, along with additional state and federal funds, will be aimed at completing the South Mountain Freeway and a Loop 303 Freeway. In addition, Proposition 400 funding is being directed to constructing two new freeway corridors, adding general purpose and high occupancy vehicle lanes to nearly the entire existing system, improving elements of the arterial street network, improving regional bus service, and expanding the light rail transit system.

COMMENTS RECEIVED DURING FINAL PHASE REGIONAL COUNCIL MEETING ON MAY 25, 2005

Comments from William “Blue” Crowley, Valley Resident

Comment: Comments at CTOC should be reported back to MAG to be included in the process.

Response: The Citizens Transportation Oversight Committee (CTOC) has a representative on the MAG Transportation Policy Committee and the MAG Regional Council. This representative reports on CTOC meetings, issues and positions.

Comment: Will there be a freeway put in where the population is growing around the Gila River Indian Community?

Response: The Arizona Department of Transportation is conducting a study process for locating the South Mountain Freeway. The possibility of considering options for locating a part of this freeway on the Gila River Indian Community is included in their study process.

Comment: Only nine percent of the sales tax funds are going for arterials. He said that two million of the six million people projected will live in this area and there are no arterials planned.

Response: The arterial system is a vital element of the overall transportation network. In the past, it has been constructed through a combination of local funding, city and county shares of the State Highway User Fund, and developer contributions accompanying the construction of new housing and commercial/industrial units. None of the regional sales tax for transportation that was authorized by Proposition 300 was applied to arterial streets. The dedication of nine percent of the Proposition 400 regional sales tax revenues to arterial street improvements represents an important step forward in the recognition of the important role these facilities play in meeting regional transportation needs.

WRITTEN COMMENTS FROM DIANNE BARKER, CITIZEN (comments received June 15, 2005)

Comment: The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) approved carbon monoxide (September 3, 2003) budgets on page 4-2 are not current to human public standards.

Response: The federal carbon monoxide standards have been established by EPA to protect public health. The MAG region has not violated the federal air quality standard for carbon monoxide since 1996. In March 2005, the EPA approved the MAG Carbon Monoxide Maintenance Plan for the Maricopa County Nonattainment Area containing air quality modeling that demonstrates maintenance of the federal carbon monoxide standard through 2015. EPA rules require that the conformity budgets in the EPA-approved Carbon Monoxide Maintenance Plan, effective April 8, 2005, be used for the 2005 MAG Conformity Analysis.

Comment: The vehicle registration data from July 2002 on Page 4-8 are unreal current factually.

Response: According to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) guidance issued January 18, 2001, areas are strongly encouraged to review and strive toward regular five-year updates of planning assumptions, including vehicle registration assumptions, when making conformity determinations. For the 2005 MAG Conformity Analysis, July 2002 vehicle registration data were used to estimate ozone and PM-10 emissions and January 2003 vehicle registrations were used to estimate carbon monoxide emissions. These vehicle registration data are the latest provided to MAG by the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) and are within the five-year period established by the FHWA guidance. MAG will use newer vehicle registration data when provided by ADOT in the format required by MOBILE6 emissions model.

Comment: The modeling for the one-hour and eight-hour ozone is not based on year-to-date reality (2005-2006) and ineffective budgets.

Response: The conformity budgets from the One-Hour Ozone Maintenance Plan were found by EPA to be adequate for conformity purposes, effective September 1, 2004. On June 14, 2005, the EPA approved the One-Hour Ozone Maintenance Plan for the Maricopa County Nonattainment Area including the conformity budgets. EPA regulations require that these approved budgets be used for future conformity analyses. The approved budgets represent the years 2006 and 2015.

According to the July 1, 2004 EPA transportation conformity rule amendments, new eight-hour ozone nonattainment areas with adequate or approved one-hour budgets should use these budgets until eight-hour ozone budgets are determined to be adequate or approved in an eight-hour ozone plan submitted to EPA.

Comment: The air quality and transportation models EMME/2 (traffic) MOBILE 6.2 (emissions) and M6Link (emissions locations) need reality check.

Response: MAG strives to maintain state-of-the-art air quality and transportation models. The transportation models are being updated, re-calibrated and re-validated on a regular basis. Validation of the transportation models is accomplished by comparing data from recent traffic counts, on-board bus surveys, and travel speed studies with model predictions. The primary reality check performed on the air quality models is comparison of model predictions with air quality monitoring data. Historically, the MAG air quality models have performed well and met the EPA performance criteria. In the mid-1990s, the MAG air quality models predicted attainment of the carbon monoxide standard by 2000. This model prediction was accurate, as verified by actual monitor readings for this pollutant.

Comment: U.S. Department of Transportation Draft Environmental Impact Statement (Exhibit A) at Sky Harbor Airport does not correlate with MAG's determination.

Response: The information in Exhibit A is not pertinent to the 2005 MAG Conformity Analysis for the Draft FY 2006-2010 MAG Transportation Improvement Program and Draft MAG Regional Transportation Plan-2005 Update. The 2005 MAG Conformity Analysis was developed pursuant to the transportation conformity rules in 40 CFR Part 93, Subpart A, for conformity of transportation plans, programs, and projects developed, funded or approved under Title 23 United States Code or the Federal Transit Laws. Conformity for airport improvements are subject to separate general conformity rules for emissions of criteria pollutants caused by a Federal action.

Comment: Emissions reductions for the Central Phoenix – East Valley Light Rail Transit project continue to lack credibility of emission reductions.

Response: Exhibit B contains the emission reductions for the Central Phoenix/East Valley Light Rail Transit project as part of the Evaluation of Proposed Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) Projects For The Federal FY 2003 Year End Closeout. The information in Exhibit B is not pertinent to the 2005 MAG Conformity Analysis for the Draft FY 2006-2010 MAG Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and Draft MAG Regional Transportation Plan-2005 Update. This evaluation of proposed CMAQ projects provides the estimated emission reductions and cost-effectiveness scores for consideration in the TIP programming process. The methodologies used in quantifying the emission reductions for CMAQ projects were developed in accordance with federal CMAQ Program guidance and MAG updates the methodologies periodically. CMAQ projects programmed for funding in fiscal years 2006 through 2010 are included in the Draft FY 2006-2010 MAG TIP. All projects in this TIP, as a whole, have been evaluated for the 2005 Conformity Analysis.

COMMENTS RECEIVED DURING FINAL PHASE TRANSPORTATION PUBLIC HEARING ON JUNE 16, 2005

Comments from Paula Forster, Valley Resident

Comment: There is absolutely nothing being said as to transportation in the West Valley, any buses. We have Sun City West, Sun City and Surprise. Lots of seniors live there. You have a numerous amount of people that are driving vehicles that should not be on the road, and to prevent a lot of hazards we definitely need to have some kind of public transportation. Also, for anyone that has driven on Bell Road or Grand Avenue, it is loaded, it has a lot of cars. The backup on these roads during rush hour and even nonrush hour is very hefty. Again, because there is no public transportation, there's no park-and-rides, there is no bike routes for even children who may want to get on a bike, or adults, and bike ride to different areas, to different activities, to the stadiums that are there, to museums that are there. And I think it's important that this commission look at those issues and get some kind of road development, redevelopment, improvement out to the West Valley. Certainly 303 has been talked about as coming through to Route 17, and that needs to be done as quickly as possible. What we did here out in Surprise is that maybe you would be coming out there with some kind of improvement in 2008, maybe 2010. I don't think anybody in the West Valley can wait that long. So I hope that you will reconsider any decisions you make as to bringing public transportation for those in need.

Response: The Regional Transportation Plan includes several transportation investments that will benefit residents in the West Valley. These include HOV lanes on I-10 and Loop 101, completion of the Loop 303 between I-10 and I-17, capacity improvements to Northern Avenue, El Mirage Road, Beardsley Road and Happy Valley Road. The Plan also includes several transit improvements that will benefit the West Valley. These include the North Loop 101 Connector providing service between Surprise and Scottsdale, the West Loop 101 Connector providing service between Arrowhead Towne Center and Desert Sky Mall, Supergrid Bus service on Bell Road, Thunderbird, Glendale Avenue, Cameback, Indian School, Thomas, McDowell and Van Buren, Litchfield Road, 99th and 75th Avenues. Limited stop bus service will also be provided on Grand Avenue between Surprise Towne Center and Central Station in Phoenix. While these investments will be phased in over time, some of them will occur earlier with local funding provided by the served communities. An example is the Grand Avenue limited bus route which will begin service to Surprise in late 2005 or early 2006 with funding provided by that community. The West Valley will also benefit from associated investments in ADA paratransit service that will address the needs of handicapped residents who would find it difficult to use the fixed route bus system.

Comments from Victress Jenkins, Valley Resident

Comment: I take the bus. I don't drive. And consequently sometimes I go down to the bus stop. I try to make sure I'm there at a certain time to catch the bus. There are some of the routes that are more frequent than others and even when you do try coordinate with a bus, you're waiting, you know, for long periods of time. And sometimes they wait, sometimes they don't. But I'm just wondering with the new light rail how well the buses and the light rail are going to be coordinated. It would be wonderful to

know that you could get off of Bus A and be able to get on the light rail, and many people may not be able to take advantage of it. Maybe many people will. But I think that has to be taken into consideration. But I think you need to have more frequent bus service now and not wait 20 years. I used to work in the central corridor and I'd get on the bus at 23rd Avenue to go down to my place of work which was on north Central, and the kids, the children from the Phoenix Union High School District were thrown on there. If you weren't there by a certain time, forget about having a seat unless somebody was chivalrous. But it was very hard to get on the bus sometimes. That's why you need to have more frequent bus service on the routes. But I think that they need to coordinate the bus routes plus look forward to the time when the light rail is running, that also has to be taken into consideration. And also we need to have more bus stop covers. It's very hot when you're out there waiting. Some places have no bus stop benches. Some have some and some have neither one, and as a bus rider it would be helpful.

Response: The Regional Transportation Plan includes Supergrid Bus service that will provide consistent frequency of service across jurisdictions on a bus route. In many cases service frequencies will be 30-minute off peak and 15 minute peak period service. The regional transit network described in the Regional Transportation Plan was developed to ensure connectivity between bus and rail transit modes. The Plan also includes funding for bus stop improvements such as benches and bus shelters that will enhance the comfort of riders waiting for the bus.

Comments from William “Blue” Crowley, Valley Resident

Comment: In the RPTA document, it says for Phase One for bus stop improvements, \$7 million; Phase Two, \$9 million; Phase Three, \$10 million; and Phase Four, \$12 million. And we never get to status quo. A bus stop, if you have 32 people boarding, you're supposed to, by industry standard, have a shelter...the numbers don't work. It's not in the TIP. Where are the bus stops? They're not in the TIP.

Response: In the FY 2006-2010 TIP there is approximately \$2.3 million in projects listed solely as bus stop pullouts/improvements. The remaining money for bus stop pullouts/improvements that adds up to the total for Phase One in the RPTA document comes in the form of other projects, and is not listed solely as bus stop pullouts/improvements. In addition, bus stop pullouts/improvements do not necessarily mean bus shelters. Other improvements to bus stops could include the installation of benches and signage. Neither state nor federal law requires bus stops to have bus shelters.

The money allocated for bus stop pullouts/improvements in the Regional Transportation Plan totals approximately \$26.4 million in 2002 dollars over the course of the next 20 years (the dollar amounts listed in the comment from Mr. Crowley are in year-of-expenditure dollars). The total dollar amount for bus stop pullouts/improvements is not reflected in the FY 2006-2010 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), because the FY 2006-2010 TIP is only the first phase (first five years) of the new RTP.

Comment: When it comes to air quality, we have had what, three days of violations for ozone? And if we have a hot day tomorrow – we have only had 103 day. If we have a hot day today or the next one, it's not going to be the unhealthy – what's it going to be. What's the one above that?

Oh, it's a serious violation we are going to have. Now we already have three violations for particulates and we are already under sanctions for that. What are we going to do with the ozone now? Don't you people understand that it gets hot in Phoenix?

Response: As of June 22, 2005, there have been six High Pollution Advisories for eight-hour ozone in 2005. High Pollution Advisories are issued to avoid exceedances and violations of the air quality standard but do not necessarily mean that the standard will be exceeded. During this ozone season, the Maricopa County Nonattainment Area has exceeded the eight-hour ozone standard five times at three monitors. A violation of the eight-hour ozone standard occurs when the three-year average of the fourth-highest reading at each monitor exceeds 0.085 parts per million. In 2004, only the Humbolt Mountain monitor violated the eight-hour ozone standard.

Based on preliminary data, as of June 22, 2005 there has been one exceedance of the 24-hour PM-10 standard recorded at the West 43rd Avenue monitor and one exceedance at the Buckeye monitor in 2005. For 2004, Maricopa County previously reported that on three days, at least one of the monitors at Buckeye, Durango Complex, Higley, and West 43rd Avenue exceeded the 24-hour standard. No sanctions have been imposed for violations of the PM-10 standard in the Maricopa County Nonattainment Area.

Comments from David Carey, Valley Resident

Comment: Valley Metro, it seems to be very difficult to get questions answered. For example, if you have a complaint about something or an issue about something, that when you do call in to have the complaint taken care of, that they never get back to you within the seven to 10 days.

Response: Complaints received by customer service are relayed to the department or transit operator responsible for a given route. Responses to customer complaints are copied to Valley Metro Customer Service to ensure that a complaint has been responded to. Individuals who have not received a response to their complaint should contact customer service to determine the status of their complaint and what action has been taken.

Comment: One of the major things is the bus ramps, that sometimes they don't come out and then you can't get into the bus. Well, if I have to wait 30 minutes in Arizona, for someone like myself that don't sweat, I can't afford to wait at the bus stop to catch another bus. So those are some of the issues.

Response: Every effort is made to ensure that wheelchair ramps and lifts are in working order. If you are unable to access a bus due to a malfunctioning lift or ramp you should immediately contact Customer Service with the route number and the bus number.

Comment: In Peoria, the Dial-a-Ride does not run according to the bus route – I mean, according to the bus schedule. And so I don't know all the particulars but maybe someone can verify whether or not that is the case. And also in Glendale it does not run according to the schedule of the bus.

Response: Dial-a-Ride, also known as demand response transit, does not follow a specific bus route. Instead, it operates within a defined coverage area. Dial-a-Ride comes in two varieties: ADA Paratransit and Senior Dial-a-Ride. ADA Paratransit typically serves origins and destinations that are within 3/4 mile of a fixed route bus route. As the name implies, this is a parallel transit service for handicapped riders who are physically incapable of accessing the fixed route bus system. Senior Dial-a-Ride typically operates within a defined service area as opposed to a defined route. In many cases, both types of service are provided by the same vehicles and the same agency. In these cases, ADA Paratransit trips get first priority. In both cases, rides are arranged by telephone reservation and are typically door-to-door trips.

Comment: Will the West Valley ever integrate where you don't have to change buses every time you cross boundary lines?

Response: The main obstacles to integrating Dial-a-Ride service in the West Valley is the structure of service. Many of the West Valley communities provide Dial-a-Ride service using city or town vehicles driven by municipal employees. Since this service is locally funded, providing service to destinations outside the community can be a problem. East Valley communities were able to integrate their Dial-a-Ride service under East Valley Dial-a-Ride since most communities were already contracting out Dial-a-Ride service. For this reason, it was a relatively simple matter to combine their efforts under one service contract and service provider to provide seamless trips across the member jurisdictions.

Comment: Why does someone who uses a wheelchair have to pay much more than someone that does not use a wheelchair or a taxi service. I mean, the rates, it's a real difference when it comes to an ambulatory person versus nonambulatory.

Response: Dial-a-Ride service is provided by multiple providers in Maricopa County. From an operations standpoint, Dial-a-Ride is the most expensive type of service that can be provided by a jurisdiction. On average, passenger fares generally cover less than 6 percent of actual operating costs, compared to more than 23 percent for fixed route bus service.

Comments from Sabra Van Cleef, Valley Resident

Comment: We need bus service along Bell and Grand as soon as possible so that people can get to the shopping centers for the grocery store. The nearest grocery store to me is two miles away. To the library, the stadium, the museum, Dial-a-Ride helps but it's very restrictive.

Response: The Grand Avenue Limited bus service that currently runs between Central Phoenix and Peoria will be extended north and west to Surprise with funding from the City of Surprise. Implementation of this service extension is pending the development of an interim Park-and-ride lot and should occur within the next three to six months. Service on Bell Road will be improved with the implementation of the North Loop 101 Connector in 2007. The North Loop 101 Connector will operate between Surprise and Scottsdale on Bell Road and Loop 101 and will stop at the Arrowhead Transit Center providing connections to other regional and local transit routes.

Comment: This is the regional bus system and it maps out the new services that it proposes, and I hope that money that was accepted at that time would help us get regional transportation, that we could get on a bus and go to these places without having to call a week or two weeks in advance to get an appointment to go to get on a bus to go to the grocery store. It says here a plan lays out 20 years of transportation improvements, including, and I read, "more bus service more often." And I ask, when are we going to see the new service implemented? Is it going to be within the first two or three years or is it going to be 10, 20 years down the road? So far we can't even connect with Metro service to go downtown Phoenix and a couple times Dial-a-Ride did help me get to 100 and Grand but I gave up on them after a while. And I rode two hours on a bus to see a friend in Scottsdale and rode two hours back the next day. I gave up. I couldn't depend on them to do that. So my question is, I understand the money is there. We need this transportation now for everybody, not just seniors but for other people too who may not be able to drive for different reasons, or families that don't have a second car, they may need to get on the bus and go where they need to go. How soon can we have the bus service?

Response: The Regional Transportation Plan includes a series of transit investments that will be undertaken over the 20-year life of the Plan. Service is phased in the Plan in order to allow Valley Metro to make the needed capital investments that will support service extensions. These investments include additional buses, Dial-a-Ride vans, vanpool vans, regional park-and-ride lots, transit centers, and operations & maintenance facilities. While some services will not occur until late in the program, there are several service improvements that will provide transportation benefits to area residents early in the program. The Grand Avenue Limited bus service will be extended north and west to Surprise in the near future. Implementation of this service extension is pending the development of an interim park-and-ride lot and should occur within the next three to six months. Service on Bell Road will be improved with the implementation of the North Loop 101 Connector in 2007. The North Loop 101 Connector will operate between Surprise and Scottsdale on Bell Road and Loop 101 and will stop at the Arrowhead Transit Center, providing connections to other regional and local transit routes. Service on East Loop 101 between Arrowhead Transit Center and Desert Sky Mall Transit Center will be implemented in 2008.

**COMMENTS FROM WIENKE TAX, U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY,
REGION IX (E-mail dated June 16, 2005)**

Comment: In general, I found the conformity analysis to be well-organized and well written. I have a few minor comments. Chapter 1, page 1-12, I thought it might be clearer to discuss one-hour ozone before discussing eight-hour ozone, since the eight-hour ozone analysis relies partly on adjusted one-hour budgets.

Response: In the final document, discussion on the one-hour ozone conformity test requirements will be moved to precede the eight-hour ozone section.

Comment: Chapter 4, page 4-10, the text indicates that “For the 2005 MAG Conformity Analysis, emission reduction credit for these 68 sweepers was calculated using sweeping schedule and traffic data (i.e., lane miles swept, sweeping cycle length, and annual average daily traffic per lane mile on streets swept) provided by the local jurisdictions that purchased the units. Emissions reduction credit for PM-10 certified sweepers to be funded in the future were quantified using data from these 68 locally-purchased units.” This information on sweeping schedule and traffic data would be very useful to the Air Quality Technical Advisory Committee (AQTAC) in its deliberations about how CMAQ funding is spent. Is it possible to make these data available to AQTAC members prior to the next set of deliberations on CMAQ funding?

Response: The MAG Methodologies for Evaluating Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) Projects contains a PM-10 Certified Street Sweeper methodology that requests the number of lane miles swept, sweeping cycle length, and annual average daily traffic per lane mile on streets to be swept from agencies submitting sweeper projects. These data are used to calculate the emissions reductions and the cost-effectiveness scores which are used by the MAG Air Quality Technical Advisory Committee (AQTAC) for prioritizing proposed street sweeper projects. These data will be provided when the next set of requests for CMAQ funding of street sweepers are presented to the AQTAC for prioritization.

Comment: Chapter 5, page 5-9, What happens to the other 10 percent of available federal CMAQ funding that is not obligated by MAG?

Response: The Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program funds that are apportioned to states are subject to a federal spending limitation, called Obligation Authority (OA). Obligation Authority rates vary from year to year and may be less than the funding amount apportioned to states. During the period covered by the Transportation Equity Act of the 21st Century (TEA-21), OA rates averaged less than 90 percent. The remaining ten percent is carried forward until the federal government authorizes additional Obligation Authority.

For the period FY 1992 through FY 2000, Arizona's CMAQ obligation rate is tied for fourth highest among all states at 93 percent, according to Table 2 of the Federal Highway Administration report "The Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program: A Summary of Ninth-Year Activities (FY 2000) October 1999 – September 2000."

Comment: Chapter 5, page 5-9, "Measure by Measure TCM Assessment" indicates that the information in the succeeding pages has not been updated since 1998, and reflects calendar year 1996. Can this information be updated for the next conformity analysis? The outdated information seemed in contrast to the rest of the conformity analysis, which used recently updated data wherever available.

Response: Thank you for the comment. This paragraph is outdated and has been eliminated from the "Measure by Measure TCM Assessment" section on page 5-9.

To update this Chapter, MAG contacted agencies with TCM (Transportation Control Measure) commitments in applicable SIPs in December 2004 through January 2005. Each agency reported to MAG that all TCMs in the applicable SIPs are on schedule and there are no obstacles to implementation of the TCMs. Therefore, the TIP and Regional Transportation Plan provide for the timely implementation of the TCMs in the applicable air quality plans and nothing in the TIP or RTP interferes with the implementation of any TCM in an applicable implementation plan.

The "Measure by Measure TCM Assessment" section in Chapter 5 summarizes the TCM commitments from the state and local governments from air quality implementation plans. The assessment also contains the impact of the FY 2006-2010 MAG Transportation Improvement Program and Draft Regional Transportation Plan-2005 Update on measures that are being implemented beyond levels committed to in the air quality plans. The information in this section is updated each time the TIP and RTP are updated.

Comment: As a final note, if you are going to make any edits to the document before it goes to the MAG Regional Council, you might try to incorporate the information on the final rule for approval of the MAG One-Hour Ozone Maintenance Plan and Redesignation Request, which was published in the Federal Register on June 14, 2005 and was effective that day.

Response: The information from the June 14, 2005 EPA final rule approving the One-Hour Ozone Maintenance Plan and conformity budgets will be incorporated into the final 2005 MAG Conformity Analysis document.

III. PUBLIC HEARING AGENDA AND TRANSCRIPT

Agenda

TRANSCRIPT STARTS HERE

IV. APPENDIX A PUBLICITY MATERIAL

**POSTCARD NOTICES OF THE OPEN HOUSE AND PUBLIC
HEARING WERE MAILED TO APPROXIMATELY 25
REGIONAL LIBRARIES THROUGHOUT THE VALLEY.
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